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SIPDIS

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DEPT ALSO FOR AF/S

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [LT](#)

SUBJECT: LESOTHO: ELEVEN APPOINTED TO SENATE

REF: A) MASERU 0093 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. The Office of the Prime Minister announced on February 28 that His Majesty King Letsie III, in accordance with Section 55 of the Constitution of Lesotho, appointed eleven new members of the Senate, the upper house of Parliament. (NOTE: The Constitution stipulates that the Council of State should advise the King in the selection of Lesotho's eleven appointed senators. The total number of Senators is 33, including 22 principal chiefs and eleven royal appointees. END NOTE.) The Senate was sworn-in on March 1, and immediately elected Chief Letapata Makhaola as Senate President and Hlomohang Morokole as Vice President during its subsequent first session. Chief Letapata Makhaola was former Vice President of the Senate and Hlomohang Morokole was Senate Clerk from 1995 until 2002.

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Who's On The List?  
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¶2. The newly appointed Senators are:

-- Dr. Motloheloa Phooko (Former Minister of Health and Medical Doctor)

-- Dr. Timothy Thahane (Former Minister of Finance and Development Planning)

-- Mr. Refiloe Masemene (Former Minister of Justice, Law and Constitutional Affairs)

-- Dr. Mphu Ramatlapeng (Medical Practitioner and Director of the Clinton Foundation)

-- Professor Zacharia Mats'ela (Author and retired university Professor)

-- Mr. Ts'ele Chakela (Civil Engineer)

-- Mr. Lekhetho Phakisi (League Leader of the governing LCD party)

-- Mrs. 'Maphoka Motoboli (Retired Teacher)

-- Lt. General Makhula Mosakeng (Former Commander of the Lesotho Defense Force)

-- Chief 'Mualle Moshoeshoe (Ward Chief of Likueneng)

-- Chief Qajela Lebona (Ward Chief of Thaba-Ts'oeu)

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Ministerial Material?  
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13. COMMENT: Rumors circulating in Maseru suggest that the top five names on the above list may be offered cabinet positions or slots within the office of the Prime Minister when new ministers are sworn in at the Royal Palace on March 2. Only members of Parliament, from either house, may occupy cabinet-level positions. Among those on the list are two high ranking LCD members who lost their bids to retain their lower house constituencies during the February 17 National Assembly election or in the party primaries (Phooko, Thahane). Their appointment as Senators may cause consternation among opposition parties who view the ballot box as the principal determinant of cabinet appointments. The official swearing-in of the new cabinet is expected late March 2. END COMMENT.

PERRY